

HENNEPIN COUNTY

ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

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Representative Dave Pinto
100 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard
503 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Sandra L. Pappas
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 2113
St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Pinto, Sen. Pappas, and Members of the House and Senate:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my support for HF1233 and SF1972, legislation that would restrict strip searches for minors and end the practice of solitary confinement (also sometimes referred to as “disciplinary room time”) for youth in correctional facilities.

As someone who prosecutes youth, I am deeply concerned about the trauma these practices can inflict on young people. Studies have shown that strip searches and solitary confinement (disciplinary room time) can lead to long-lasting psychological harm, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. These practices also exacerbate existing inequities in our justice system by disproportionately affecting youth of color and those from low-income families.

I believe that we have a collective responsibility to protect the rights and well-being of all individuals, including children who are in the justice system. As a prosecutor, I want to ensure that the practices we use to hold young people accountable for their actions are effective in promoting positive change, not causing further harm.

By enacting this legislation, we can take an important step towards creating a justice system that is fair, just, and equitable for all. This legislation will provide young people with the support and resources they need to address any underlying issues that may have contributed to their behavior, rather than subjecting them to invasive and traumatic practices.

I urge you to support this legislation and work toward creating a justice system that is centered on the well-being and rehabilitation of youth. We must hold youth accountable for their actions and we must do it in a way that improves their chances for a successful, law-abiding future.

Sincerely,



Mary F. Moriarty
Hennepin County Attorney